FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

19 MARCH 1984

Sudan

President Ja'far Numayri, in a 17 March speech reported by SUNA, held Libya responsible for the "abortive and stupid" air raid on the Sudanese radio station at Omdurman the previous day, asserting that the attack was carried out by a TU-22 bomber from Libya's airbase at Al-Kufrah. In response to the attack, Sudan and Egypt began implementing their defense agreement and deployed "joint defense forces" to protect strategic objectives in Sudan, Numayri disclosed.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak condemned the raid as "an act of madness" and swiftly dispatched Defense Minister 'Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazalah and Foreign Ministry First Under Secretary Usamah al-Baz to Khartoum to confer with the Sudanese leaders, according to reports by MENA. After delivering a message to Numayri, Abu Ghazalah declared that Egypt will take whatever steps are necessary to defend Sudan against any aggression, MENA reported. The Sudanese chief of staff subsequently flew to Cairo for talks with Egyptian military officials while an Egyptian delegation arrived in Khartoum to meet with senior Sudanese officers at their military headquarters, MENA noted. Commenting on the joint military measures, Egypt's *AL-AHRAM* said the two countries will take decisive action to deter any aggressor and punish any new aggressive act against Sudan, according to Cairo radio.

Among expressions of support for Sudan, PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat denounced the air attack during a visit to Khartoum while an official Saudi source expressed the Kingdom's "indignation" over the incident, Omdurman and Riyadh radios reported respectively. In Khartoum, an officially organized mass rally protested the air raid and the foreign minister sent urgent messages to the United Nations, the Arab League, the OAU, and the ICO, explaining the "treacherous Libyan aggression" and linking the incident with previous Libyan "plots" against Sudan, SUNA noted.

Libya categorically denied responsibility for the air raid in an official statement carried by JANA on 17 March. Asserting that current events in Sudan are the result of a "popular revolution" which has support among the Sudanese Armed Forces, it said the air raid was the action of "revolutionary elements in the Sudanese Air Force." The Libyan statement, which was issued by the Popular Committee of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison, challenged President Numayri to provide proof of his allegations and wondered why no attempt was made to intercept and down the intruder if its course was being followed and its identity was known. The Committee for Foreign Liaison also summoned Arab and African ambassadors in Tripoli to explain Libya's view that Numayri's allegations are designed to give "imperialist" countries a pretext to intervene and are part of a U.S. "plot" against Libya, Tripoli radio reported. Earlier, Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland radio claimed that a Sudanese opposition group in London had "confirmed" that the raid was carried out by rebel elements in the Sudanese Air Force. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian official spokesman asserted that "revolutionary Ethiopia knew nothing whatsoever about the alleged bombing of Omdurman," according to Addis Ababa radio.

Lebanon

The National Dialogue Conference in Lausanne continued over the weekend with discussion at the main session on 18 March focusing on the opposition's demand for the abolition of political sectarianism, Beirut radio reported. The conferees approved proposals for administrative decentralization within the framework of political centralization, the radio said, and they earlier decided to divide parliamentary seats equally between Christian and Muslim deputies. The conference adjourned its evening session on 18 March in order to hold peripheral bilateral consultations in preparation for the 19 March session, the radio noted.

As for the security situation in Beirut, 15 people were killed and 45 others were injured as fierce clashes erupted across the contact lines on 17 March, Beirut radio reported. Lebanese press reports cited by the radio asserted that France has agreed to use its troops in Beirut to identify cease-fire violators subject to the approval of Syria and the opposing Lebanese sides. Earlier, an Amal Movement official affirmed his organization's willingness to release detainees if the Christian side agrees to do likewise, according to the radio. Meanwhile, security sources cited by Voice of Lebanon radio said contacts were under way for the release of kidnapped U.S. diplomat William Buckley who is being held outside Beirut.

Commenting on Israel's security requirements in southern Lebanon, a senior Israeli official stated that his government will not agree to UNIFIL's becoming part of the security arrangements and that Israel is seeking to protect its northern border, Jerusalem radio reported. Earlier, in a Radio Monte Carlo interview, President Amin al-Jumayyil stressed his intention to adopt security arrangements in the south,using an expanded UN force along with the Lebanese Army, "which we are currently purging."

Two more Israeli soldiers were injured in recent action in Lebanon, according to ITIM and IDF radio reports. One was wounded when his patrol was ambushed near Sidon while the other was slightly hurt when IDF command vehicles came under fire in the Al-Biqa' valley. Meanwhile, in a statement reported by Jerusalem radio, the IDF spokesman said Israel has no knowledge of a new Soviet-made radar station being built near Mount Sannin. The spokesman's comment followed a *HA'ARETZ* story that "intelligence sources" in London have reported the establishment of a new type of radar station surrounded by Syrian SAM batteries.

Iran-Iraq War

According to information available to the Iraqi military command, Iran is planning to launch a new offensive against Iraq in a "desperate attempt to infiltrate our international borders," a spokesman for the Iraqi Armed Forces General Command announced in a statement carried by Baghdad Voice of the Masses radio on 17 March. The spokesman warned that not only would Iraqi forces strike at Iranian troops and "tear them limb from limb," but they would also strike at "defined targets deep inside" Iranian territory.

Israel also received a warning from Iraq over the weekend via an Iraqi Foreign Ministry spokesman's statement to INA. The spokesman warned the "Zionist entity" against any attempt to strike at the Iraqi chemical fertilizer plant west of Baghdad as it did against the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Any "adventure" of this kind will not pass without "an appropriate response," the spokesman emphasized. He also warned against "any party" providing help to the Iranian Air Force in carrying out a "criminal act" against Iraqi economic installations, Baghdad radio added.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Iraqi III Army Corps said that he is ready to "use all means, including chemical weapons," to defeat the Iranian forces, Radio Monte Carlo reported. He had not, however, as yet received orders from Baghdad to use such weapons, he stressed. Nevertheless, Iran claimed that over 460 Iranian combatants were injured by Iraqi chemical weapons in the Khaybar operational sector on 17 March. This use of "microbic and nerve gases" brought the total number of Iranian soldiers injured by chemical attacks to in excess of 2,200, IRNA added.

In other military developments over the weekend, Iranian forces continued to consolidate captured positions in the Khaybar operational sector, according to an Iranian military communique broadcast by Tehran radio on 17 March. Some 500 Iraqi troops were killed or wounded when a counterattack launched in the Talayah region northeast of Basra was "severely crushed" by waiting Iranian units, IRNA and Tehran radio announced. On the other hand, an Iraqi military communique carried by Baghdad radio on 17 March claimed that Iraqi soldiers successfully destroyed an attacking Iranian force east of Basra, leaving more than 1,000 Iranians dead and large numbers wounded.

PLO Affairs

Yasir 'Arafat held meetings with Sudanese President Numayri and Egyptian envoy Usamah al-Baz during his visit to Khartoum at the weekend, MENA reported. Earlier, 'Arafat announced that the recent meetings of the PLO's Higher Military Council in San'a' dealt with ways of "escalating armed struggle inside the occupied homeland and southern Lebanon against the Zionist occupation forces," according to Baghdad Voice of PLO radio.

In Damascus, the PFLP-General Command denounced Jordanian official measures "in cooperation with 'Arafat and his clique" against Palestinian activists known for their opposition to "capitulatory" plans. The General Command statement, which was reported by SANA, warned the Jordanian authorities that if they do not release Mustafa Khamis, one of the front's members, it will reply to Jordan's "fascist" methods with appropriate means.

Syria

Jordanian King Husayn's recent criticisms of U.S. Middle East policy are "not enough" although they contain "some objectivity" in assessing U.S. policy toward the Arabs, Damascus radio asserted in a 17 March commentary. Calling on those Arab rulers who have "erred" to end their dealings with "U.S.-Israeli capitulation plans," the radio said Jordan should take practical steps to turn words into deeds while Egypt should cancel everything that has resulted from the Camp David accords.

Arab-U.S. Relations

Moroccan King Hassan II, in his current capacity as chairman of the 12th Arab summit conference, the 4th Islamic summit, and the Jerusalem Committee has sent a message to President Reagan, urging the United States not to transfer its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, MAP reported. The message, carried by the Moroccan agency, expressed hope that draft legislation in this regard now before Congress will be fought and rejected.

Iraqi-Soviet Relations

The Iraqi-USSR committee for economic, technical, and scientific cooperation completed its session in Baghdad with the signing of the minutes, a new economic agreement, and a protocol on increasing trade and commodity exchanges, INA reported. CPSU Central Committee member Yakov Ryabov, leader of the Soviet delegation, expressed his satisfaction with the "positive results" achieved at the session, INA added.

Tunisia

A presidential statement to the House of Representatives, delivered by the prime minister and broadcast by Tunis radio, said the committee of inquiry into the recent riots "confirmed the intention by the police command to paralyze the activity of the police," which was consequently unable to protect people and property. Responsibility for this rests primarily with the former interior minister who "intentionally embarked on misleading us" and who put his own interests before those of the state, thereby committing treason. The statement also noted that 84 people were killed and 938 were injured in the disturbances.

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Government Postpones Subdistrict Elections

BK181618 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] The government has decided to postpone the upazila [subdistrict] elections, beginning from March 24 to April 2, till the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections due on May 27 (?this year). A press release issued by the government in Dhaka today said the decision to postpone the upazila elections has been taken to avoid the path of confrontation and pave the way (?for holding) meaningful dialogue and understanding and to reach the ultimate objective of transition to democracy and for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere. It said the postponement has been effected in view of the (? call) given by different political parties, and with the hope of getting (? effective) cooperation of all irrespective of party affiliations and opinion in the greater interest of the nation and the country. The government sincerely hopes that in view of the decision, the political parties will take part in the discussions with the government about the overall democratic process, including the parliamentary and presidential elections.

The press note said the government totally believes in peaceful transfer of power through a democratic suffrage. Keeping this belief in view, the government has been taking appropriate measures to [word indistinct] program. Efforts have been made to establish real democracy and to (? initiate) democratic suffrage on the lower level with a view to strengthening the [words indistinct] in the process of our administrative setup. To make this effort effective, union parishad [union council] and paurasabha [municipal] elections have already been completed, and with [passage indistinct]

Parties Welcome Decision

BK190355 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0110 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] Leaders of several political parties and people from all walks of life have welcomed the government's announcement on postponing the upazila elections. Agency reports and press statements issued immediately after the announcement made last evening described the decision as timely. They said it would create an atmosphere [word indistinct] of holding national elections for transition to democracy. The 15-party and 7-party alliances are expected to formulate their points of views at their meetings today.

According to EASTERN NEWS AGENCY, one of the leaders of the 15-party alliance in his first reaction said the decision reflected good sense of the government. The Pir Saheb of (Tesila) has also welcomed the announcement and expressed the hope that responsible political parties would now [words indistinct] to democratization.

The Coordination Council of Bar Association has announced that their [as heard] action program has been canceled in view of the government's decision to postpone the upazila elections.

Delhi Reports Reaction

BK190405 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] In Bangladesh, the opposition parties and alliances spearheading the movement for an end to martial law and return to democracy have described the postponement of upazila elections as a victory of the people. Reacting to the government's decision to postpone the poll, they said the government should now accept their 5-point demand. The alliances did not, however, give any indication whether they would accept the government's invitation to take part in political dislogue on democratic process, including the issues of presidential and parliamentary elections.

Delhi: Two Political Leaders Released

BK161243 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Text] Two prominent political leaders have been released in Bangladesh. They are the former prime minister and vice chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, Mr Shah Azizur Rahman, and a member of the Awami League Presidium, Mr Abdul Mannan. They were arrested on the 1st of this month on the eve of a hartal [strike] sponsored by the opposition alliances.

AFP: 25 Parties Form Ershad-Initiated Front

BK171219 Hong Kong AFP in English 0837 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Dhaka, March 17 (AFP) — Twenty-five political parties have responded to a proposal by Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammed Ersnad to forge a new political front, informed sources said.

President Ershad, who earlier declared that he would soon join full-fledged politics, initiated the idea of a new front to face mounting opposition from the country's established and organised political parties and alliances, sources said.

They said that most of those who intended to join were minor and obscure political parties or groups supporting the programmes of the military ruler.

"The move to forge the new front aims at accelerating transition to democracy and resist conspiracies against national sovereignty," a front leader said.

Informed sources said these political groups had negotiated among themselves in front of presidential representatives on the prospect of the new front. [sentence as received]

Meanwhile a sub-committee has been formed with representatives of the political groups willing to join to work out details of the proposed group.

President Ershad, who is expected to retire from the army soon to join active politics, last November masterminded the creation

of a new political party called Janadal with the help of some dropouts and deserters from other political groups.

To extend his political reach to the rural level, he also patronised the formation of countrywide committees organised with local social and political leaders to implement his 18-point rural uplift programme.

The upstart Janadal and the implementation committees as second fiddle are now playing the nucleus role in forging the new front, the sources said.

Two opposition alliances, comprising 22 parties, have strengthened a campaign for more democracy in the country in recent months since Lieutenant General Ershad declared himself president with nationwide strikes and information drives.

Statement on Alleged Plot To Kill Zia Demanded

BK190936 Hong Kong AFP in English 0928 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] New Delhi, March 19 (AFP) — Opposition deputies demanded in parliament today that the government make a statement on alleged Indian involvement in a plot to kill Pakistan's president, Mohammad Ziaul Haq.

London's *SUNDAY TIMES* reported yesterday that General Zia foiled the plot, hatched by London-based exiles. Indian intelligence officials may also have been involved, the newspaper said, and five Indian diplomats were expelled or left Pakistan after the plot was discovered in January.

Speaking in the upper house, Jaswant Singh of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] said it was serious matter and the government should take the house into its confidence.

Suresh Kalmadi of the Congress Party's opposition group, Sarad Pawar, supported Mr Singh's demand for a statement.

There was no response from the treasury benches.

Mr Singh also recalled statements by Indian authorities on relations with Pakistan which he said indicated a deteriorating security situation. The people had a right to know the latest developments, he said.

Gandhi Offers To Hold Dialogue With Akalis

BK170703 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] The prime minister has said she is always prepared to hold talks with the Akalis and at no time has she declined to meet them. In an interview to the Hindi weekly *SAPTAHIK HINDU STAN*, Mrs Gandhi reiterated that the right cause will be to end the violence, mutual bitterness, enmity, and disbelief between communities before talks can be resumed. She urged all political parties and different sections of society to create an atmosphere which would be helpful in holding meaningful talks on the Punjab issue.

Regarding the disrespect shown to the Constitution by the Akalis, the prime minister said it is not only wrong, but also against the law of the land. She said it is regrettable and a misguided effort.

AFP Account

BK170724 Hong Kong AFP in English 0623 GMT 17 Mar 84

[By Ravi Velloor]

[Excerpts] New Delhi, March 17 (AFP) — Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has announced she will travel to the troubled northwestern state of Punjab to meet pro-autonomy Sikh leaders but will not allow them to hold a gun to her head.

In an interview with the Hindi weekly *SAPTAHIK HINDU STAN* published today, Mrs Gandhi offered to go to Punjab if it could help solve the problem in the state. But she added: "I can meet the sants (leaders) on human consideration and not at the point of a gun."

In the interview, Mrs. Gandhi asserted that the Sikh Akali Dal party, which is spearheading the Punjab protest for greater autonomy and religious rights was no longer in control of the movement.

"Smugglers, known criminals, anti-national elements and agents of some foreign countries who are supplying the extremists with weapons and money are responsible for the prevailing state of affairs," she said.

30 Arrested for Defiance of Order in Amritsar

BK190403 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] Over 30 persons were arrested from different parts of Amritsar last night for defiance of prohibitory orders. Earlier in the day, they had taken out a procession in defiance of the orders.

Landowners, 'Extremists' Clash in Punjab

BK181558 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] In Bihar, eight persons were killed and seven others injured in clashes between landowners and alleged extremists in (Masahibloc) of Patna District during the last 2 days. Senior district officials are camping there. The situation is reported tobe peaceful but tense. Several arrests have been made in this connection.

Lok Sabha Assured on Situation in Punjab, Haryana

BK190921 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] The minister of state for home, Mr Venkatasubbiah, assured the Lok Sabha today that government is taking all necessary steps to put down extremist activities in Punjab and Haryana. Apart from taking administrative action, government will continue to mobilize public opinion against terrorists and extremist activities. Mr Venkatasubbiah was replying to a calling attention motion on Punjab and Haryana moved by Mr (Zainul Basher), Congress-I, and Mr Harikesh Bahadur, Democratic Socialist Party. The motion was regarding activities of extremists in Punjab and Haryana including recent incidents of reported assaults on the lives of the deputy speaker of the Haryana legislative assembly, Mr Ved Pal, and the former Punjab chief minister, Mr Darbara Singh.

Mr Vankatasaubbiah said that the government has always strongly condemned violence. Dastardly attacks on lives of innocent persons have evoked indignation from all quarters. The terrorism of extremists needs to be met adminstratively as well as with the support of all responsible sections of the society. The people of Punjab have reiterated their resolve to preserve communal amity by organizing peace marches.

The minister told the house that the situation in the Punjab has been a cause of great concern. Additional central police forces have been made available to Punjab. Patrolling by the police has been intensified. Nine hundred and fiftyone weapons and about 2,700 rounds of ammunition have been recovered. One thousand six hundred and fourteen persons were arrested under the Arms Act.

About attempts on the life of Mr Ved Pal, the minister said that ivestigation is being conducted by special staff under the supervision of senior police officers. Special efforts are being made by the state authorities to apprehend culprits. Mr Venkatasubbiah also gave the house details about the attempt on the life of Mr Darbara Singh and said the investigation is in progress. He told the house that Mr Darbara Singh is well. He assured the members that all necessary steps are being taken by the government to put down the extremists activities in the state.

No Sending Police Into Temple

BK191244 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] The minister of state for home, Mr Venkatasubbiah, has told the Lok Sabha that the government has no intention of sending a police force into the Golden Temple. He was replying to a calling attention on Punjab and Haryana moved by Mr (Zainal Basher) of Congress-I and Harikesh Bahadur of Democratic Socialist Party. The motion was regarding activities of extremists in these two states including recent attempts on the lives of the former Punjab chief minister, Mr Darbara Singh, and the deputy speaker of the Haryana Assembly, Mr Ved Pal.

Mr Venkatasubbiah told the house there has been a marked improvement in the law and order situation in Punjab. He expressed happiness over the fact that communal amity has been maintained in the rural areas of the state. He said armed guards had been provided to public transport to ensure safe traveling. The organization of peace committees and peace marches have brought back a sense of security among the minorities.

Illegal Gun Factory Discovered in Assam

BK180855 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] In Assam, police have unearthed an illegal gun factory at (Unjopani) village in Nowgong District. In a raid yesterday at the village bordering Karbi Anglong District, the police recovered 43 finished single barrel guns, one gun barrel, some ammunition and gun making equipment. The owner of the gun factory was arrested.

According to the district police superintendent, the owner has confessed supplying guns and ammunition to criminals, antisocial elements, and extremists. A vigorous police drive is continuing in and outside the district to apprehend othersconnected with the activity.

Dock Strike Continues 'By And Large Peaceful'

BK181654 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] There is no change in the situation at major ports as the port and dock workers strike entered the 3d day today. Loading and unloading operations continued to be affected.

The general secretary of the port and dock workers association, Mr S.C. Anthony Pillai, told newsmen in Madras that following a request from the Defense Ministry, unloading of vessels carrying defense equipment will be carried out. The workers will do it free of charge.

The union leaders had a meeting with the Madras Port Trust chairman. Later, it was decided that one passenger vessel, *Nankauri*, of the shipping corporation will be sailing from Madras to Port Blair tomorrow. There were 12 vessels stranded at the port and 11 more waiting at the outer ancharage.

The Calcutta Port Trust chairman told our correspondent that four more ships have arrived at Sandhead, increasing the number of stranded ships there to 14.

An official spokesman told the All-India Radio correspondent in New Delhi this evening that the situation at all the ports is by and large peaceful. According to reports reaching the center, essential services have been maintained at all ports. The spokesman said there was some obstructions to medical services at port hospital in Marmugao. The patients have been transferred to general hospital. In all, 140 ships have been stranded because of the dock workers strike, he added.

The control cell at New Delhi continues to watch the situation round the clock.

Curfew Imposed in Calcutta Following Clashes

BK181601 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] In Calcutta, dusk to dawn curfew was imposed today in the two police station areas of Garden Reach and (Metiaburus) following clashes between two groups of people and subsequent police firing. Three people, including the deputy commissioner of police, were killed in the incident. According to police, the two groups clashed in the morning and the police opened fire to disperse them. Later, they restored to arson and looting and attacked the police.

Security Tightened

BK190404 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] In Calcutta, the situation in the Garden Reach police station area is under control. Security arrangements have been further strengthened — 22 people have been taken into custody. Four persons including a deputy commissioner of police and his bodyguard were killed in yesterday's violent incident and police firing in the area.

Minorities Affairs Minister Relinguishes Post

BK190219 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] Alhaj Mohammad Abbas Khan Abbasi, federal minister for religious affairs and minorities affairs, relinquished charge of his office today.

Zia Says Ban on Student Unions 'Irreversible'

BK190249 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said in the forthcoming general election, every adult will have the right of vote barring those who have deprived themselves of this right by violating hudud [Islamic penal] laws or because of moral turpitude. He was talking to newsmen soon after arrival in Karachi this evening from Islamabad on a 2-day visit.

The president said he is committed to implement the political program announced by him on the 12th of August last year.

In reply to a question, he said the student unions had been banned after taking into account all the pros and cons and the decision was irreversible. The president pointed out that student bodies had only been (?cleansed) of politics. They had been given all other concessions and opportunities under the new arrangement. He hoped that the lenient policy of the government toward students would not be misunderstood and would not be exploited for nefarious ends. When his attention was drawn to reports that some political parties were trying to join hands to exploit the students community, the president said any alliance with selfish motive would be dealt with effectively.

On Afghanistan, the president said it was not a bilateral issue between Pakistan and the Kabul regime, but a global issue, and should be solved at the international level. He said the world conscience should be awakened to the reality that in Afghanistan an attempt has been made toward the end of the 20th century to prove that might is right.

About the situation on Pakistan's eastern border, the president said there was nothing to worry about.

Minister on Infiltration of 'Trained Saboteurs'

GF171707 Karachi DAWN in English 13 Mar 84 p 1

[Excerpt] Islamabad, March 12 (PPI/APP): Mr Mahmood A. Haroon, federal interior minister, said here today that there were several countries which were sending trained saboteurs into Pakistan to disturb the law-and-order situation in the country.

He was talking to newsmen after inspecting the passing-out parade of the fourth batch of police recruits of the training centre, Islamabad.

The minister said the government had long ago given up naming Al Zulfiqar as the sole agent for subversive activities in the country in view of the presence of other saboteurs working against the ideology and integrity of the country.

He observed that so long as the country stayed and stuck to its ideology, the "countries against our ideology" would continue to send trained saboteurs and it was very natural.

Replying to a question Mr Mahmood Haroon said the law-and-order situation as a whole was very satisfactory and well under control.

As for the resentment among students against the ban on their unions and federations, he said it was only natural and there was nothing serious about it.

He asked a questioner to name any country which did not face any internal disturbance. Minor disturbances were a common phenomenon in every country, he stated.

Asked whether the government had any proof or evidence of foreign aid or capital involved in Sind during the MRD movement, the minister replied that obtaining concrete evidence in such cases was impossible, but one had to pause and ponder when a person or party started spending money beyond its resources and conditions.

Replying to a question, he said investigations were held as a matter of routine.

The interior minister told reporters that political detenus were being released and many had been released from different jails. They were not being freed because they were members of the MRD or the defunct Muslim League or any other party, but purely because of the expiry of their detention period.

Asked whether the government was considering freeing the political leaders and workers detained since long, the interior minister said the government reviewed every case and took decisions on whether or not to release the political leaders.

Replying to a question whether he had met some politicians recently about the political situation of the country, he replied that many political leaders were his friends.

He also reiterated President Ziaul Haq's pledge to hold elections, saying the president had clearly announced that all stages for the holding of the elections would be completed before March 1985 and power would be transferred to the elected representatives of the people.

JANG Welcomes Release of Political Workers

GF191000 Lahore JANG in Urdu 14 Mar 84 p 3

[Editorial: "Release of Political Workers"]

[Text] The process of releasing political workers which the government recently started will certainly help to ease the political situation. A number of political prisoners released from Lahore, Karachi, and Multan a couple of days ago include 11 women

prisoners. In addition, it has been reported that more people who have been detained for obscure reasons have been released.

After the assurance given by the government that general elections will be held and after the president's open declaration of a program for elections, it is clear that this time the government means what it says. However, the nature of the elections and several other related matters are yet to be settled. It is not yet clear whether the elections will be held on a party basis.

However, the president has said that there will be elections this year and in such an atmosphere the release of politicians is a must. Among the political prisoners who have not yet been released are Nawabzadah Nasrullah Khan and (Retired) Air Marshal Asghar Khan. Both have been under detention for a very long time now. Both of these leaders are true patriots and have healthy political thinking. Their release will certainly help the country.

NAWA-E WAQT Comments on F-16 Delivery

GF171220 Lahore NAWA-E WAQT in Urdu 11 Mar 84 p 3

[Editorial: Second Consignment of F-16's!]

[Excerpts] The Pakistani Air Force has received its second consignment of F-16's. The same number of aircraft arrived in Pakistan a year ago, and the third consignment is due to arrive in June. Pakistan was supposed to have received 40 F-16's under a long-term agreement with the Reagan administration in 1981, but now it will be 2 more years before the remaining 24 airplanes reach Pakistan.

India has raised a vociferous hue and cry that Pakistan's military might will advance 10 years ahead of India's. The series of fulminations continues; whenever there is any news of new armaments for Pakistan (Harpoon missiles, antitank equipment, helicopters, and so on), India's recriminations reach psychotic proportions. This, however, is merely an example of "the wife's whining increasing too much" [Urdu idiom], because even before the agreement for Pakistan to purchase arms from the United States, India had finalized a purchase of 100 Jaguar aircraft from Great Britain. In addition, it had signed an agreement with France for 2,000 of the latest Mirages and their subsequent manufacture in India. During this period, it has also been receiving the latest MIG's, battleships,and tanks in large quantities from the Soviet Union. In the recent discussions in New Delhi, Marshal Dmitriy Ustinov announced that the most sophisticated arms will be provided to India on an urgent basis.

Although India continues to present pacts of "friendship, peace, and cooperation" to Pakistan its vehement clamor over an extremely limited arms sale to Pakistan gives the impression that this neighbor of ours cannot tolerate the idea that Pakistan should have even a tenth of its military capacity.

U.S. leaders and officials do not hesitate to point out that despite the 1959 agreement, the United States will not assist Pakistan in the event of an Indian attack, while Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Dmitriy Ustinov has assured Mrs Gandhi that "owing to the potential danger from Pakistan" all possible assistance will be provided. Regarding the supply of arms to India, he also said that "even though the amount of arms given to India will not exceed that given in the past, it will definitely be more lethal and potent."

Pakistan is not laboring under the delusion that the United States will give arms aid to Pakistan in the same proportion as that given to India by the Soviet Union or that the PRC will compensate for it. Therefore, whatever aid is forthcoming from the United States will be reinforced by faith, determination, and national strength. For this end, it is essential to set our house in order and work toward domestic national unity. The F-16's will serve to boost national morale,but besides the waxing eloquent of Indian recriminations, there are certain elements who view the F-16's not as a plan for greater and stronger defense but as a product of the Zia administration's policy and leanings. They tend to forget that such armanents are essential for the country's defense and were not taken along when former rulers vacated their posts.

Kidnapping of U.S. Official in Beirut Noted

GF171850 Tehran Television Service in English 1230 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] William Buckley, the American political attache in Beirut, was kidnapped yesterday morning while leaving the Ra's area where his residence is located. The fate of Mr Buckley is not known and so far no group has claimed responsibility for the action.

This has been the third American kidnapped since February the 8th this year. The others were Frank Regier, professor of the United States University in Beirut, and Jeremy Levin, a high-ranking official of a United States television station.

Musavi Chairs 18 March Cabinet Session

LD181629 Tehran IRNA in English 1623 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March, 18, IRNA — The last Cabinet session for the current Iranian year of 1362 beginning last March was held here today headed by Prime Minister Musavi. During the session, the premier hailed the courage and the self-sacrifice of the Muslim umma' adding that the difference between the officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran and those in other states was that the Islamic Republic officials were noted for their services to the people and not for the status they hold in the society.

Prime Minister Condemns Baghdad Conference

LD170025 Tehran IRNA in English 1818 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — Iran's Prime Minister Musavi has referred to the Baghdad conference of Arab foreign ministers as "a Satanic trick" which failed to bring about its expected results "because of the vigilance and alertness of the Muslim world." He has also warned Iraq's foreign supporters of a "punishment in due course." Musavi, who was speaking at a session with members of the Islamic revolution's committees here on Thursday said the conference in Baghdad this week from which were absent representatives of Arab governments friendly with Iran "aimed at nothing but perpetuating the domination of the big powers against the interests of the nations." He said the designers of such conferences "seek to place the highest emphasis on racism and nationalistic sentiments which is against the dictates of Islam."

Musavi reminded that the Islamic revolution has continued to advance since its triumph in Iran, primarily because it is not a revolution conceived with racist territorial values, he said.

The Iranian prime minister noted also that once the news of crimes perpetrated by the Zionist regime in Baghdad are really disclosed to the world, and once the world peoples learn of Baghdad's midnight massacres of children, women and civilian people in Iran, then Mitterrand and the likes of him would not be able to continue their military support to Iraq. He added that much as the Western governments had invested in suppressing news reports of Baghdad's deployment of chemical weapons in the battlefronts they eventually decided albeit unwillingly, to have "some brief references" to the news. Musavi also criticised Moscow for its passive stand to the issue reminding that none of the countries which avow a concern for the rights of the masses had brought themselves to saying anything in condemnation of Baghdad's crimes, "because they are worried about their own crimes in Afghanistan and their own bombardment of residential quarters of its Muslim people."

Ardabili Calls Recapture of Majnun 'Big Lie'

LD161606 Tehran IRNA in English 1558 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — In this week's Friday prayers, Chief Justice Ayatollah Musavi Ardabili denied Iraq's claim of capturing the northern Majnun island. He said the Iraqi attack in the area had been firmly crushed.

"Saddam said a very big lie today that his forces had captured the north of the Majnun islands and were preparing to attack and capture the south of the islands.

"But according to information given to me by one of the officials it became apparent that the attack last night by two equipped Iraqi battalions in the Talayah region was firmly crushed and all enemy personnel had been annihiliated," he said.

Reports from the Khatim ol-Anbiya' headquarters said the Iraqi attack to recapture the liberated area in the Talayah region of the southern operational theater had been repulsed and a considerable number of Iraqi troops were killed or wounded.

The temporary Friday prayers leader, speaking to thousands of Tehranis attending the Friday prayers at Tehran University and the surrounding area, said the Islamic forces would remain in their bunkers and fight the enemy during New Years Day (March 21) so to give a positive response to Imam Khomeyni's call.

Chief Justice Ardabili said about 550 ulema had been absorbed by the judiciary of whom close to 50 were mujtahids (jurisprudents).

He said about 125 of them were put to work in courts and 425 in the prosecutor's offices throughout the country.

However Ayatollah Ardabili added that there were only 2,200 judges in the country who were not enough for a population of 40 million people.

He said that with the guidances of the imam and Ayatollah Montazeri the theological schools should produce ulema for judicial work and eliminate the shortage.

On the upcoming Majlis elections, the chief justice said everyone should participate actively in the elections in order to ensure they are held in a free and healthy atmosphere.

"All the sectors of the nation...should come to the election arena. We should all choose candidates together and go to the polls tovote, which would be none other than for the strengthening of the Islamic Republic."

In relation to some propaganda that there would be no freedom in the elections, he said the revolution in Iran was an Islamic one and therefore freedom was acceptable only in the framework of Islam.

"Whatever is banned by Islam is banned by the Islamic Republic. We want freedom only under the banner of Islam, the same way our martyrs gave their lives for Islamic freedom."

Majlis elections are due on April 15.

Armed Forces Joint Staff Issues Communiques

Communique No 1,667

LD161803 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Communique No 1,667 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] Throughout yesterday, the combative forces of Islam, while in full control of their own defensive positions and the areas under their control, opened up intense artillery and mortar fire and crushed enemy movements. Thanks to our forces firing on enemy tanks and artillery in the Marivan and Panjwin operational sector, part of the equipment and fortifications of the Saddamist forces were destroyed. Firing exchanges continued along the entire front in the Piranshah, Sar Dasht, and Hajj 'Umran operational sectors. Thanks to our forces firing on these fronts, activities of the enemy infantry troops and vehicles were halted and movements of the Iraqi units were disrupted. Moreover, over 35 enemy troops were either killed or wounded and one of their ammunition depots was destroyed.

Our warriors on the border fronts of Bakhtaran and Ilam defended their own positions and opened fire on several enemy vehicles along the supply axes of this region. At 0200 this morning, several enemy combat patrols tried to approach and penetrate our defensive positions in the old Shur-e Shirin region, but our forces inflicted losses on them and forced them to flee.

Yesterday, the combatants of Islam stationed on the banks of the Arvand Rud, while halting the enemy's engineering and combat activities, destroyed more than 30 emplacements for light and heavy weapons and observation posts, 1 106-mm gun, and 2 enemy mortar launchers on the western side of the river. About 15 enemy troops were either killed or wounded in this region.

As a result of the enemy's long-range artillery fire on Abadan, 35 houses and shops and 1 school were damaged yesterday.

Communique No 1,668

LD171755 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Communique No 1,668 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] Sporadic exchanges of artillery and other heavy weapons fire have continued on the country's northwestern operational fronts during the last 24 hours. The mighty forces of Islam, while taking defensive action, returned the fire of the Saddamist forces and bombarded the enemy's defense lines, artillery emplacements, and supply and communication routes, silencing enemy fire and destroying two trucks and more than seven bunkers for Iraqi troops and weapons. The mighty forces of Islam also killed or wounded 33 Ba'thist troops. In the Panjwin operational fronts, the defenders of Islam fired on a helicopter pad of the Saddamist forces, disrupting their movements and halting their activities for some time.

On the border fronts of Bakhtaran and the southern parts of the country, the Islamic combatants continued to consolidate their own defensive positions, monitoring movements and activities of the Iraqi forces by dispatching patrol groups, opening defense and harassing fire, and erecting observation posts. In each region, the forces of Islam set on fire sections of enemy positions and killed or wounded a number of enemy troops.

In the Khaybar operational theater, the victorious Islamic combatants continue to consolidate the captured positions.

At 1230 yesterday, one armored unit of the enemy tried to launch a limited attack and infiltrate the Mehran region. But the ever vigilant forces of Islam crushed the invading enemy unit and forced it to retreat. During these operations, the vigilant forces of Islam inflicted losses and damage on enemy troops, equipment, and tanks.

The return fire of the brave warriors of the Navy in the Abadan and Khorramshahr region on enemy positions and fortifications on the other wide of the Arvand Rud silenced enemy fire, destroyed six emplacements for heavy weapons and mortars, and annihilated two of their soldiers.

During yesterday's operations in the Abadan region, the Iraqi forces shelled the city, damaging 50 houses and stores and 2 mosques.

Communique No 1,669

LD181711 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1634 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Communique No 1,669 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] Yesterday in the northwestern operational sector, exchange of heavy weapons fire continued between the forces of

Islam and the Saddamists. On the Piranshah, Sar Dasht, Hajj 'Umran, Marivan, and Panjwin border fronts, our combatants brought enemy positions and bases under heavy fire, silencing enemy fire, destroying parts of enemy positions, and killing several Saddamists. In the (?Choman Mostafa) sector, the fire of the mighty forces of Islam prevented enemy vehicle movement on supply roads.

In the western operational sector, sporadic exchanges of artillery and mortar fire continued; it was more intense in the Qasr-e Shirin sector.

At 2200 hours on 16 March, enemy patrols intended to penetrate the defensive positions of the forces of Islam in the Mehran sector, but thanks to our forces' fire, they fled after suffering casualties.

In the southern operational theater, there were exchanges of fire on all the defensive fronts; it was more intense in the Zayd, Husayniyah, and (?Nahr Anwar) sectors.

West of the Arvand Rud, our combatants destroyed three trenches and a truck carrying Iraqi personnel.

Yesterday, parts of the residential areas of Abadan were sporadically brought under long-range enemy fire, resulting in some damage to 21 houses and 7 shops.

Helicopter Gunships Attack Iraqi Positions

LD171805 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Helicopter gunships of the Airborne Division today launched intense attacks on infantry positions and commando units of Salah ad-Din from the 3d Armored Division of the Iraqi Ba'thist-Zionist Armed Forces. An IRNA correspondent reports that at 1500 today several helicopter gunships of the Airborne Division flew over positions of the Saddamist forces along the Talayah axis, and in a series of brave operations they bombed a large part of the enemy defense lines and inflicted heavy losses on the Zionist-Ba'thist forces of Iraq, particularly on the Salah ad-Din commando units.

According to observers on the front lines of the forces of Islam, following the attacks of the Airborne Division helicopters,the enemy ambulances were clearly visible trying to remove the Iraqi dead and wounded.

Iraqi Admission of Chemical Weapons Use Cited

GF180835 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1600 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Iraq today admitted using chemical weapons in the war against Iran, announcing that Iraq had no alternative but to use chemical weapons because that was the only way left for Iraq to fight attacks by the Iranian forces. According to BBC radio, a high-ranking officer of the Iraqi Army announced this, saying that if the Iranian forces are caught trying to capture new strategic positions Iraq would not hesitate to use chemical weapons.

Meanwhile, according to political experts, the official and open admission by Iraq of using chemical weapons, despite the total international ban on the use of such weapons, proves that Baghdad has been completely defeated, both politically and militarily, in a war that Baghdad itself started.

Official 'Implicitly Confessed'

LD170027 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Text] Under secretary of Foreign Ministry of the Saddam regime, Ismat Kittani, currently in Washington, implicitly confessed to the deployment of chemical weapons of this regime against the Islamic combatants. Under secretary of Foreign Ministry of the Saddam regime in justifying this act of his respective government referred to America's deployment of nuclear bombs in Japan in the Second World War and added that the present situation should be compared with the same [word indistinct]. Kittani also confirmed liberation of the Majnun Islands by the forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

UN Team Leaves for Ahvaz; Chemical Attack Reported

LD181508 Tehran IRNA in English 1120 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — The U.N. fact finding delegation currently visiting the Islamic Republic of Iran to acquire a comprehensive scope of the magnitude of the Iraqi chemical bombings, again left Tehran for Ahvaz today.

The U.N. probe team again returned to the southern operational region this morning to inspect the effects of yesterday's Iraqi chemical and bacteriological bombing as well as to interview the Islamic combatants who have been injured by these chemical, bacteriological weapons and nerve gas.

In its Saturday chemical attack, the Iraqi regime employed bacteriological and nerve bombs against the regions of Jofair and Talayah, south west of Ahvaz, and the Zayd region, northeast of Basra, all in Khaybar theatre.

Although no accurate casualty figure was immediately available, reports reaching here said that at least 460 combatants of Islam have been injured thus bringing to over 2,200 the number of Iranian defenders wounded by the Iraqi chemical attacks since the start of Khaybar offensive, Feb 22.

The Baghdad regime had deployed chemical weapons against the Iranians 48 times before the beginning of the victorious Khaybar operation.

An informed military official told IRNA that over 200 victims of yesterday's Iraqi attack were suffering from convulsion and nervous disorder while others show symptoms similar to those which appeared on the victims of the previous chemical attacks. Such symptoms, he added, were burning eyes and lachrymation, blisters, skin lesion and particularly loss of vision.

He said that Saddam is undoubtedly a war criminal and as it is indicated from his behaviour and also from the reports of the foreign correspondents, Saddam and his colleagues must have been suffering from a kind of insanity. Otherwise, he went on, it is hard to believe how he could renew his chemical attack exactly at a time when the U.N. probe team is investigating these very inhuman violations in Tehran.

This military official further added that Saddam is scoffing at the international rules and is persisting on his atrocious conduct while enjoying the support of superpowers and reactionary regimes which are his accomplices in the crimes he perpetrates.

It is recalled that an Iraqi commander had stated Saturday that his country's regime did not feel obligated to observe the international regulations.

UN Team Ends Investigation, Leaves for Geneva

LD191034 Tehran IRNA in English 1020 GMT 19 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 19, IRNA — The six-member United Nations delegation assigned to investigate the Iraqi deployment of toxic chemical weapons against the Islamic forces left Tehran for Geneva at 10:00 am local time (6:30 GMT) today following a six-day visit and inspection of the areas where the chemical weapons have been used.

The U.N. delegation of experts which included specialists from Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Australia, arrived in Tehran last Tuesday, one day ahead of the original schedule. The delegation visited those afflicted by the chemical warfare, hospitalised in Tehran and Havaz and talked with doctors of the hospitals and the victims.

The fact-finding delegation also visited sites of the Iraqi deployment of toxic chemical weapons and took samples of them for further investigation and verification.

Members of the delegation in their inspection tours of the hospitals and sites of the incidents compiled their findings and took additional materials for further tests. The delegation will submit a report of their findings to the secretary general of the U.N., Javier Perez de Cuellar.

IRNA: French Media Play Down Chemical Weapons Issue

LD181635 Tehran IRNA in English 1620 GMT 18 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — Although the French government is the main supporter of the Iraqi regime in its war against Iran, it does not want to share in the disgrace resulting from the Iraqi deployment of chemical weapons against the Islamic combatants.

Ever since outbreak of the Iraqi imposed war in Sept. 80, the French government has been supplying the Iraqi regime with all kinds of arms and has been trying to prolong the war.

Now that the use of toxic weapons by the Iraqi forces against the Iranian forces had come to the fore world public opinion and the French have been referred to as one of the countries supplying Iraq with such weapons, that country's media have launched a massive campaign to cover up this issue.

The French mass media have been trying to play down the issue of complicity of the French government in the stupendous crimes of the Iraqi regime against people of Iran. However, the French press find it difficult to deny employment of chemical weapons by the ruling regime in Baghdad. By the same token, the French media could not cover up the close relations between the French and Iraqi governments, therefore consequently the only option left for them was to blur the whole issue and overlook deployment of toxic chemicals by the Iraqi regime.

One such measure taken in this direction is that the French media have been magnifying of such allegations as "suppression in Iran," "administration of torture in Iran," or "bad conditions in Iranian jails." The sources of such baseless claims range from Amnesty International to fugitive members of Munafiqeen (MKO) [Mojahedin-e Khalq]

Furthermore, the French media gross exaggeration of these issues in recent days are designed solely to overshadow the Iraqi deployment of chemical weapons towards which there has been a world-wide silence, and of which it wishes to exonerate itself.

Meanwhile, the French press in order to white-wash that government's complicity in Iraqi crimes also "dispatching youth to the warfronts," or "using human diversionary issues as waves."

The reason for this attitude of the French press is believed to be that so far no issue has damaged the standing of the socialist administration to such an extent.

Reportage on Nicaraguan Leader's Visit

Ramirez Mercado Interview

LD170030 Tehran IRNA in English 1923 GMT 16 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — Member of Nicaragua's board of Government of National Reconstruction Sergio Ramirez Mercado said here today that Nicaraguans cannot condone such crimes of war as employment of chemical weapons. He said Nicaragua condemns Iraq's deployment of chemical weapons in the Iraq-Iran war as a crime against humanity.

The visiting Nicaraguan official who was interviewed after his return to Tehran from a visit to Sarcheshmeh copper complex, in Kerman Province of Iran said also despite threats by imperialism, the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the revolution in Nicaragua can continue to advance. He also praised the Islamic Revolution in Iran for having succeeded in ridding the Iranian nation from an alien western culture. The Nicaraguan official reminded that the revolution in Nicaragua like the revolution in Iran is conceived with religious values.

The member of Nicaragua's Board of Government of National Reconstruction said with reference to his visit to Sarcheshmeh copper complex in Kerman today that the United States insists on projecting the Middle East countries and especially those of

such countries which have experienced a revolution, merely as oil producing countries. He said despite this wrong portrayal by the United States, in his visit to Tehran and especially during his visit to Kerman Friday, he had personally felt Iran's power economically. He added that in his view Iran is destined to emerge as a big economic power.

Asked elsewhere in the interview about the situation in Nicaragua, he said, that his country has to fight off counterrevolutionaries comprised of former members of Somoza's army which encroach upon Nicaragua fron Honduras. He said the group of counterrevolutionaries are aided by the CIA and reminded that the counterrevolutionaries have no support among the people of Nicarqgua.

He also criticized Washington for escalating tension along Nicaragua's borders, noting that Nicaragua anticipates even more widespread attacks from the Honduran-based counterrevolutionaries. He said a budget appreciation of dlrs. 21,000,000 by the U.S. Senate to counterrevolutionaries and the presence of the U.S. fleet near the Nicaraguan waters are indication of wide-scale attack upon Nicaragua by the U.S. government.

Elsewhere in the interview the Nicaraguan official praised the Iranian officials for the country's humanistic conduct with the Iraqi prisoners of war.

Mr Mercado also said that he had invited Prime Minister Musavi to visit Nicaragua which he hoped would take place in the coming Iranian year (begins March 21).

He said the visit would probably lead to the signing of contracts between the two revolutionary countries in the fields of agriculture, minerals and oil.

16 Mar Press Conference

GF171530 Tehran Television Service in English 1230 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Sergio Ramirez Mercado, a member of the supreme reconstruction council of Nicaragua's revolution, who is here on an official visit, held a press conference yesterday.

He said that the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the Nicaraguan revolution held many things in common and belonged to the oppressed and deprived people.

He said he had held very satisfactory talks with Iranian officials and had invited the Iranian prime minister to visit his country next year. He added that during his stay he was convinced that Iran would soon emerge as a big economic power. He further observed that the Iranian nation has based all its social affairs on the Islamic fate. This, he added, has brought the nation sovereignty and independence.

Our revolution too is a popular one in which Christianity and Christians are involved. Iran's Islamic Revolution and the Nicaraguan revolution, however, have had major ethical yields as every real revolution should.

He also strongly condemned the Iraqi regime for its supplement of chemical weapons in the fronts against the Iranian combatants.

Joint Communique

LD171848 Tehran IRNA in English 1822 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA — A joint communique was issued here today between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the high ranking Nicaraguan politico-economic delegation which paid an official visit here from 12-17 March, 1984, headed by Dr. Sergio Ramirez Mercado, member of the Board of Government of the National Reconstruction of the Republic of Nicaragua.

In the communique the two parties stressing the convergence of the interests between the two countries, and a common stance of unrelenting struggle with the exploitive powers of the world condemned the wide spread conspiracies of these powers against the Third World countries. The following are excerpts from the joint communique issued by the two parties:

Both sides expressed their deep-felt desires to expand and consolidate close and cordial ties between the two countries in political, economic and cultural areas, and condemned the conspiracies of U.S. imperialism against the Islamic revolution of Iran and against the Sandinist popular revolution of Nicaragua. They also placed emphasis on the firm determination of the nations of Iran and Nicaragua to confront and defeat all aggressions, where-ever they come from.

In this regard they condemned military presence and joint military maneuvers of the Armed Froces of U.S. with other countries both in the Persian Gulf and in Central America, considering them as direct threats against the revolutions of both countries as well as a threat to international peace and security. Both sides strongly condemned the presence of U.S. Fleet in the Persian Gulf and the U.S. special notice, that no aircraft or ship should approach the U.S. fleet in the Persian Gulf, as being against international regulations and relevent conventions as well as the violation of the sovereignty of the countries in this region.

Following the explanation presented on the part of his excellency Mr. Mir-Hoseyn Musavi on the many aspects of war, imposed on Iran by Iraq, including the massacre of civilian population, destruction of residential units, and bombardment of cities, and non-military installations, and the use of chemical and biological bombs in war fronts of the imposed war and residential areas, the evidence of which has already been submitted to international organizations, both sides condemned the delivery to Iraq, and its use, of chemical, destructive, lethal and mutilating weapons in the imposed war fronts and civilian residential areas, which leads to the escalation of the imposed war.

After exchanging views regarding the Middle East issues, aggressive and hegemonist policies of the Jerusalem-occupying regime and the U.S. support of these measures were condemned and emphasis was placed on the necessity of liebrating all the

occupied territories and respecting the sovereignty of the struggling Palestinians over their homeland.

Both sides in regard with the Palestinian cause, while noting the entire history of aggression and crimes of the Jerusalem-occupying regime against the regional Muslim and Arab nations, especially the wronged Palestinian nation and also rejecting the submissive peace plans which have proposed to stabilize and legitimize the aggression and the fruits of Zionist aggressions since 1948 up to now, stressed that the true peace can be established in this part of the world only when the deprived and oppressed Palestinian nation will gain all their legitimate rights, including their return to their homeland, self-determination and establishing independent Palestinian territories.

Both parties, condemning the tyrannical and fascist actions of the racist regime of South Africa, called for the independence of Namibia and withdrawal of this regime from Angola and expressed support for the liberation and independence-seeking struggles in this region.

17 March Departure

LD170837 Tehran IRNA in English 0802 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA — Sergio Ramirez Mercado, member of the Nicaraguan Board of Government of National Reconstruction, who headed a political, economic delegation to Iran, left here for Managua Saturday morning.

The delegation was officially seen off at the airport by Prime Minister Mir-Hoseyn Musavi, ministers of roads and transportation, Hadinezhad-Hoseynian, of power, Dr. Ghafuri-Fard, of industries, Mustafa Hashemi and also other officials of the country.

The Nicaraguan delegation, during its 5-day visit here, held talks with top officials of Iran and also insepcted the effects of Saddam's crimes in the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr. The delegation also toured the Sarcheshmeh copper complex on March 16.

The Nicaraguan delegation arrived here on March 12 and held talks with President Khamene'i, Majlis Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Prime Minister Musavi on further expansion of mutual relations.

Denial on Military Request

PA172327 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 1800 GMT 17 Mar 84

[Text] Tehran — Sergio Ramirez Mercado, member of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction, left Tehran today following an official 5-day visit to Iran. Interviewed by newsmen shortly before his departure, Ramirez Mercado denied having requested military aid from the Iranian Government.

Ramirez Mercado said, however, that Nicaragua has the moral right to accept military aid from any country that offers it, particularly at this time of aggression when the U.S. Government is publicly allocating millions of dollars to destroy our revolution and we are [words indistinct] from terrorist air attacks. Ramirez Mercado said [words indistinct] and stressed that the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions are natural phenomena that have triumphed over imperialism.

Montazeri Addresses Ministries Personnel

LD120242 Tehran IRNA in English 1925 GMT 11 Mar 84

[Text] Qom, March 11, IRNA — Ayatollah Montazeri yesterday said to a group of visiting Education Ministry staffers in charge of screening and selection of applicants, and other visitors including Defence Ministry employees that despite a common misinterpretation Islam recommends moderation in the conduct of many personal and social functions. He said Islam has sanctions against any leaning towards extremities in the conduct of many personal and social tasks.

The ayatollah said that "equity" is a word with great many implications in the Islamic laws and ethics. He reminded that throughout the Holy Koran there are references to a "temperate" ummah which is an attributive with a vast connotative meanings. He said on the strength of the Koranic phrase one could conclude that the Holy Koran exhorts Muslims to adopt a temperate mode of living midway between total self-abnegnation and asceticism on the one hand, and life of total abandon on the other.

He said the people involved in the task of screening job applicants and selecting them for government service must live up to this same princi[illegible]e rather than permit themselves to apply needlessly inflexible criteria on the one hand or employ exceedingly lax standards in the selection of applicants.